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# Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0582

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, OCON, VE, US
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN-AMERICAN SEMINAR AT FLETCHER SCHOOL
OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY

1. UPON RECEIPT OF CONFIRMED WORD VIA THE DEPARTMENT THAT INTERIOR SECRETARY ROGERS MORTON HAS PROMISED TO ADDRESS THE PROPOSED SEMINAR ON JANUARY 28, I TELEPHONED GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, THE MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PLANNING, WHO HAD PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON (CARACAS 0089) RATHER RUDELY INDICATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATION AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL AT THE SEMINAR UNLESS ON THE US SIDE THERE WOULD BE SOMEONE OF CABONET RANK. SINCE IT WAS RODRIGUEZ HIMSELF WHO HAD MADE THIS OBSERVATION, I THOUGHT HE WOULD BE CORRESPONDINGLY PLEASED TO HEAR THAT OUR SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AND OVER-ALL DIRECTOR OF ENERGY POLICY WOULD IN FACT BE PRESENT AT FLETCHER. INSTEAD, TO MY SURPRISE, RODRIGUEZ HEMMED AND HAWED AND FINALLY SAID THAT "HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT THE PRESIDENT".

2. THIS MORNING THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WILLIAM RHODES, AND A SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, WILLIAM COLES, CALLED ON THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY, RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM. HE WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE NEWS THAT SECRETARY MORTON WOULD ATTEND THE FLETCHER SEMINAR ON JAN. 28 AND INDICATED THAT HE HAD BEEN CHARGED DIRECTLY BY PRESIDENT PEREZ IN COORDINATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VENEZUELAN
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DELEGATION TO THE THREE-DAY SYMPOSIUM. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT

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PRESIDENT PEREZ HAD DIRECTED MINISTER OF PLANNING RODRIGUEZ NOT REPEAT NOT TO ATTEND. THIS EXPLAINS RODRIGUEZ'S EMBARRASSMENT IN RESPONDING TO ME YESTERDAY AFTERNOON; BUT NEITHER HE NOR ESCOVAR SALOM OFFERED ANY REASON FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE.

3. IN ANY EVENT, THE SEMINAR IS NOW DEFINITELY BACK ON THE TRACK AND THE VENEZUELANS ARE PLEASED AND EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT. A MEETING WILL BE HELD TOMORROW AFTERNOON OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN SPONSORS TO GO OVER FINAL DETAILS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CHAMBER AND THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WILL SEND A VERY STRONG TEAM TO BOSTON AND THAT FOR THEIR PART THE VENEZUELANS WILL BE WELL REPRESENTED. ESCOVAR SALOM SPOKE NOT ONLY OF HIS OWN PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE THREE-DAY MEETING BUT ALSO OF THE INCIDENTAL APPEARANCE OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE HECTOR HURTADO AND THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PEREZ GUERRERO.

4. IN CONSEQUENCE, I THINK WE MAY CONSIDER THE FLETCHER SCHOOL SEMINAR AS DEFINITELY ON AND THAT WE SHOULD NOW CONCENTRATE OUR EFFORTS TO MAKING IT AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS.
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